

20 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : New Data on Soviet Grain Imports

1. According to the Washington Post of 19 July, "US officials say they have now received information from the Soviet Union on last year's grain purchases broken down by crop and country. They say this is an 'unprecedented release of Soviet data,' the first fruits of the agricultural agreement signed at the Nixon-Brezhnev summit." Although the Soviet statistics are somewhat useful, this memorandum will explain why their release is not unprecedented and is probably not related to the US-Soviet Agricultural Agreement.

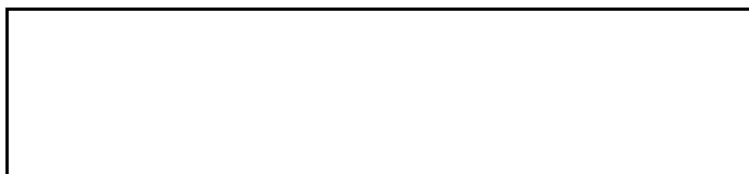
2. The new Soviet numbers have been incorporated in the attached table and basically form the fiscal year (FY) 1973 columns for the countries underlined. The same data had been available for quite some time through other means -- [] State cables, the press, and OER's [] program -- but the Soviet statistics are useful as corroboration. There are no significant differences between the numbers supplied by the Soviets and by the other sources.

3. This is not the first time that the Soviets have released such data and, therefore, they cannot be considered the "first fruits" of the US-Soviet Agricultural Agreement signed in June. Our Agricultural Attache in Moscow first obtained similar statistics in early April 1973. Moreover, both times they were given to him by the Soviet Grain Trading Organization, Eksporthleb, and not by the Ministry of Agriculture which is executing the joint agricultural agreement. Even in April most of the data had been available for many months.

4. Notably on neither occasion did the Soviets release estimates of import requirements or even how much grain had already been bought for FY 1974. It was not until this month when the Department of Commerce instituted its grain export monitoring system that we received hard evidence that the Soviets had made new purchases of more than 5 million tons of US grain.

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5. The first meeting of the statistical committee under the US-Soviet Agricultural Agreement is scheduled for the end of August at which time we will discover how forthcoming the Soviets plan to be. One recent incident illustrates that a new era in disclosure has not yet dawned and that the Soviets have actually taken a step backward: for the first time the latest Soviet Trade Handbook (1972) does not contain figures on grain imports or exports. Even though the data recently released by Eksportkhleb helps fill this gap, the latter are not as detailed as those usually given in the trade handbooks and are on a fiscal year basis which makes comparison difficult with calendar year data in the previous handbooks.



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Chief

USSR/Eastern Europe Division

Attachment:
As stated

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Footnotes to Table

- a. Bought in April 1973 for delivery in April-October 73. According to Exportkhleb, none was delivered in FY 1973.
- b. Bought in April 1973 for delivery in May and June. According to Exportkhleb, none was delivered in FY 1973.
- c. Bought in March 1973 for delivery in May, June and July. Assume all was shipped in FY 1973.
- d. Bought in April 1973 for delivery in April - June 1973. Assume all was shipped in FY 1973.

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Routing Slip

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Remarks: 4: Thanks -
 10: Should we brief any of your clients?

Executive Secretary

7/31/73

Date

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